

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Gilbert Zane, 78, retired general store owner,
Lower Paia

"You gotta serve the customers. The shelves were behind the counter. You give the customer whatever they ask for. They could pick themselves, but most times you pick for them. Most times they didn't know where things were. That's the old style of storekeeping."

Gilbert Zane, Chinese, was born October 3, 1901, in Honolulu where his father, a Kula pig farmer, had come to recuperate from illness. After his father died, Zane went to China in 1906 with his mother. At the age of fifteen, Zane returned to Kula and stayed with an uncle.

In 1918, Zane attended Lahainaluna School and graduated in 1923. Two years later, he began working as a clerk at Tam Chong Store in Lower Paia. In 1928, he purchased his own store in Pauwela.

In 1934, he closed the Pauwela store and opened Zane Store in Lower Paia, selling groceries and clothing. Zane closed the store in 1964. A year later, he and his wife, Daisy, moved to Oahu. Today, they live in Kaneohe. They enjoy growing plants and working in their garden. They are also commercial lei sellers.

NOTES FROM UNRECORDED INTERVIEW

with

Gilbert Zane (GZ)

February 6, 1980

Kaneohe, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Gilbert Zane, Today is February 6, 1980, and we're at his home in Kaneohe.

Mr. Zane, can you tell me when and where you were born?

GZ: October 3, 1901, in Honolulu.

WN: What were your parents doing in Honolulu at that time?

GZ: My father was a pig farmer, you see, in Kula. He got sick, and there weren't any good hospitals in the area. So he went to Honolulu, and later he died there. I don't remember anything about Honolulu because I went back to Kula soon after. Then, when I was five years old, my mother took me to China.

WN: Where in China?

GZ: Canton. It was around 1906. Just like the Japanese people, the Chinese wanted to go back to the old country. So my mother took me back, and I went to school there. I lived with my mother in a house in the village. Everybody had a house there. Those days, one clan would stay in one village--so the Zanes would all be in one village, the Wongs in another village. But nowadays, everybody is scattered.

WN: Did your mother work at all?

GZ: My mother was a rice farmer. Also, we farmed sweet potato.

WN: Did she sell what she grew?

GZ: No, it was only for home use. Only when she had a surplus, she would sell to people.

WN: Were you going to school in China?

GZ: Yeah, I went to school. I can still read Chinese, you know. I learned a little English and arithmetic, but not much.

WN: Until what grade did you attend?

GZ: No grades I don't remember.

WN: What was the name of your village?

GZ: Foo Too Mui.

WN: Can you describe your house?

GZ: The walls were made of dirt and bricks. The floor was only dirt. The roof was different from the walls--I don't know what you call it Clay, I think. But it looked something like shingles--like what you see on the houses today. But our house didn't have any wood.

WN: What type of work did you do in the fields?

GZ: I did regular field work.

WN: Did you have chores like chasing rice birds away?

GZ: No, I didn't need to. Those days there were no insects or anything like that. Not like now. I don't remember too much about China.

WN: Okay. When you were fifteen years old, you returned to Hawaii?

GZ: Yeah. My uncle from Kula was a farmer, and he sent me the boat fare.

WN: How much did he send?

GZ: I'm not sure. But I know that the fare from Hawaii to China was sixty-five dollars with free kaukau.

WN: What did your mother say about you leaving?

GZ: My mother already knew I was going. It was all right to her. We were not rich people, you know. I was young, so I just listened to what they tell me. When they tell me to go, I go. When you young time, you gotta listen. You cannot just do anything you want.

WN: So you had to quit school?

GZ: Yeah. I quit school in China.

WN: Did you go directly to Maui from China?

GZ: No, the boat docked in Honolulu, and I stayed with my uncle. Actually, he was my cousin, but in Chinese we call "uncle." I stayed with him in Honolulu for only a few days.

WN: Do you remember the name of the boat?

GZ: The boat I took from China to Honolulu, I don't remember. But from Honolulu to Maui it was Claudine, I think. It was an inter-island boat. There also was a boat called McKenna and one called Haleakala.

WN: So, in 1916, at age fifteen, you lived in Kula with your uncle. What was your uncle doing there?

GZ: He raised potato and corn. There was lots of corn, those days.

WN: Did he raise pigs too, like your father did?

GZ: He didn't raise pigs for profit--only for home use. Those days, every farmer in Kula raised pigs for home use. And they raised corn in order to feed their chickens.

If you go Kula now, look on the mountainside. You can see clusters of trees. Around the trees had houses, and chickens would fly into the trees. There were no chicken coops those days. We fed the chickens with corn--we would grind the corn small. We didn't use any chicken feed like today.

Sometimes my uncle would ship pigs to Honolulu--two or three in one group, but I don't know to who. Once a week we would kill a pig and divide the pork among everybody. People would give a small amount of money for the pork. Whenever you kill a pig, you give some to them. You call them to come over for some pork. That's how it was in those days. Everybody give to each other.

WN: Were there mostly Chinese living in Kula?

GZ: Only Chinese were in Kula. Oh, there were quite a few Portuguese, and some haoles. But no Japanese. Now [today] get. Now, no more Chinese. People would call Kula "Chinatown." Still get the Chinese society over there. Get Chinese graveyard. Now, only haoles live there. Plenty from Canada. Plenty rich people. They hear about Kula, so they come over here live.

WN: What type of recreation you folks had in Kula?

GZ: Nothing. There was nothing to do. No activities. We would go school, then come home and work in the field. No time for play.

WN: But what about special times, like Chinese New Year?

GZ: Oh, Chinese New Year. We would burn firecrackers. Feast--eat chicken, pork. Just like they do today. Christmas time, we would go to church, and we would get candy and apples. That was the only time of the year you get to eat candy and apples. (Laughs)

WN: Can you describe the house you lived in?

GZ: Those days we were real poor. The roof was made of iron. The walls were made of corn stalks. Just like how the old Hawaiians lived. They would tie the corn stalks together in a row. Just like lau hala, except it was corn stalks. But water no go inside. Wind no go inside. Of course, the floor was only dirt. We would sleep on one by twelve foot boards--about four or five were placed in a row. We didn't have any mattresses. We slept on the Japanese straw mat, what you call that?

WN: Goza?

GZ: That's right. Goza. (Laughs)

WN: What about the kitchen?

GZ: Those days no more kerosene stove. We would place two galvanized pipes on the floor, and then build a fire between the two pipes. Then we would put the pot on top of the two pipes. We didn't have aluminum pots in those days. Pots were made of iron, and they were real heavy. They came from England.

WN: Where did you get the pots from?

GZ: My uncle already had them when I came. I don't know where he got them.

WN: What about the toilet?

GZ: The toilet was an earth toilet (laughs). The toilet was made of wood. The shed was quite far away from the house. Hundred foot walk, at least.

WN: Your food. What did you eat?

GZ: Rice, pork, chicken. Once in a while, we got fish. Kihei people would come up on donkeys to sell fish. Before Kihei had plenty fish, but no ice boxes those days.

WN: So how would they carry the fish?

GZ: They would pack them on baskets on the mule. They would string the fish up on plants [vines].

WN: What kind of fish?

GZ: Mostly akule. Before time had plenty, Kihei side.

WN: Did fishermen come up to Kula from other places like, say, Paia?

GZ: No Paia people came. Only from Kihei. No Kahului people. These

were mostly fishermen.

Those days, everybody walked. I walked two miles every day to go to school. To go and come back was four miles.

WN: What about stores in Kula. What could you buy in the stores?

GZ: Canned goods, mostly. The only canned goods I remember seeing in those days was corned beef and sardines. Had stores in Kula-- plenty. Had about three or four stores.

WN: Things like meat--could you get that at the stores?

GZ: No. Pork and chicken was all on exchange with other farmers. There was no market in those days.

WN: So canned goods--was that it?

GZ: They had things like Chinese canned fish. Everybody grew their own vegetables--string beans, daikon, beets.

WN: Besides farming, what other jobs were there in Kula?

GZ: Mostly everybody farmed. Some people worked at the Kula Sanitorium. But there were no other occupations I can remember. Kula Sanitorium started in 1910, 1911, or 1912, around there.

Nowadays, at my age, I cannot go Kula. It's too cold. Everybody now has electric blanket. (Laughs)

WN: So, in 1918, you left Kula to attend Lahainaluna School?

GZ: Everybody go Lahainaluna School those days. The principal of Keokea School [in Kula] was from Lahainaluna. He was a very smart man.

WN: What was his name?

GZ: If I tell you his name, going take you half-hour to write.

(Laughter)

GZ: David Kapohakimohewa. I remember him. His family lives Maui. He told all Keokea school kids to go Lahainaluna, because he graduated from Lahainaluna. Lahainaluna, in those days, you had to be Hawaiian to go. But around 1918, they opened it for other nationalities. Japanese and Chinese boys could go.

WN: How many Japanese and Chinese went your year?

GZ: About four or five Japanese. Four or five Chinese.

WN: Did you have to pay tuition?

GZ: No tuition. But we had to work for our meals and dormitory room. We only had poi and salmon to eat. Sometimes we had akule.

WN: You had poi and salmon for breakfast, too?

GZ: Morning time we had coffee, piece of bread, salmon.

WN: What type of work did you have to do?

GZ: They divided our work. Sometimes, we would feed the chickens, feed the cows, pick papaya, chop alfalfa for chicken feed. We used to feed the cows koa branches. If you had to take care the cows, you gotta gather and carry back one bundle koa, which weighed no less than 60 pounds. We would get the koa from gulches and from the roadside. Then we would bring the bundle back. They had a scale. If it weighed less than 60 pounds, you gotta go back and gather some more. So sometimes, we put a stone in the center of the koa.

(Laughter)

GZ: To make the bundle more heavy. Saturdays and Sundays, there was no school, but we still gotta carry koa, because the cows got to eat. So we got paid ten cents a bundle.

WN: During the weekdays, you folks wouldn't get paid?

GZ: No. Weekdays we worked for our room and kaukau. It took less than one hour. Then pau for the day. Those days, you get koa anyplace. But nowadays, near sugar plantations, they put poison all around. Cows could die if they ate koa that grew around sugar plantations.

WN: So what did you do with the ten cents?

GZ: We would go show. Go into town to the movie theater. Only two times a month we were allowed to go. They didn't want students going all the time. But if everybody behave, the principal gave one extra free day. So sometimes we went show three times a month. Otherwise, two times a month. When you go out, you have to go out after lunch. Morning time, you work at your job. But we have to return by 5 o'clock for dinner. If you come back late, no eat. Dining room close.

WN: Was feeding the cows the only job you did?

GZ: Not everybody could take care cows. Every year change job Or was it every semester? Every semester, I think. Some semesters, I had to irrigate cane field.

WN: So you worked only in the morning?

GZ: No. Morning and afternoon. First, morning time, you work for one hour. Then have breakfast. Then go school. After school pau, we would work again.

WN: Were there only boys at Lahainaluna?

GZ: Yeah, only boys. Girls started attending around 1924, 1925. Later, it changed to a public school--Lahainaluna High School. And this coming September, I just read in the newspaper that girls will start boarding.

You know, if you lived in the country places those days, like Kula, Kailua, or Hana, you had a choice of going to either Maui High School or Lahainaluna. Maui High School had no boarding. For kids living near Maui High School [in Hamakua Poko] or along the railroad line in places like Haiku, or Paia, or Kahului, it was easy to go Maui High School. But us country people who wanted to further their education had no choice but go Lahainaluna and live in the dorms.

Before, in Hawaii, there were not enough teachers. If you graduated from schools like Maunaloa [girl's school] or Lahainaluna, you able to be teacher already. But at Maui High School, the study is different.

WN: Was Lahainaluna a better school?

GZ: At Lahainaluna, they teach things like chemistry, surveying. By the sixth grade, they teach bookkeeping already. I took bookkeeping, but I wasn't so good at it. Lahainaluna was different from public school. They teach you good. All haole teachers from Mainland. They had one part-Hawaiian teacher, too.

WN: Was it hard to get in?

GZ: No, wasn't hard to get in. But they only could allow certain amount in, because there wasn't much space in the dormitory. There were, altogether, about 120 to 150 people boarding.

WN: And so most of the students were Hawaiian?

GZ: Mostly Hawaiians or part-Hawaiians.

It was hard for us to go Maui High School. If you lived near the railroad, it was okay. But if you live far, like us, it was hard. The train ran only from Kahului to Haiku.

WN: You graduated from Lahainaluna in 1923. What did you do then?

GZ: I worked in the cannery at Haiku for one year.

WN: Doing what?

GZ: Working anyplace. Warehouse, packing, help cook the pineapple. I moved boxes with the hand truck. Today they use forklift. Not those days. Was all by hand truck.

WN: Where did you live?

GZ: I lived in Haiku Camp. They gave free house.

WN: What was the pay in the cannery?

GZ: I got ten cents an hour. When I first started, I got nine cents an hour. Ten hours per day. Before, everybody worked ten hours. Only after World War II, it came eight hours.

WN: Because you graduated from high school, did you try to find a better job?

GZ: After graduating, I wanted a better job, but I couldn't find. I wanted to do store work, but I couldn't find. So I worked cannery.

WN: How long were you at the cannery?

GZ: One or two years.

WN: After that, in 1925, you started working at the Tam Chong Store in Lower Paia. How did you get that job?

GZ: I just went in to ask.

WN: Did you already know Mr. Tam Chong?

GZ: No, I didn't know him. I just walked in and asked for a job. Working store is better than working cannery.

WN: Why did you prefer store work to cannery work?

GZ: It was more clean, and I didn't want a common laborer job.

WN: What type of work did you do in the store?

GZ: I was a clerk. I collected money--sales. Those days, customers couldn't just pick a can from the shelf. You had to pick for them. She tell you what she want, and you get for them.

WN: You mean, the merchandise was behind the counter?

GZ: No, it was in the open. But those days, we had to go up to the customer and take off the shelf whatever they wanted.

WN: How many employees were working Tam Chong Store?

GZ: About four altogether. Not too big. Mae Morita [Mae Itamura, another interviewee] was working Tam Chong Store just before I came.

WN: Whatever happened to Mr. Tam Chong?

GZ: He went back to China. I think he died around 1929.

WN: Where was Tam Chong located?

GZ: It was where the present Nagata Store is now. Not in the same building, though. The building [where Tam Chong Store was] was destroyed by the fire. [GZ is referring to the 1930 Paia fire, which destroyed an important area in the Lower Paia business district.]

WN: What things were sold in the Tam Chong Store?

GZ: General merchandise, groceries, curios, stoves, dry goods. Those days, things sold good--made good profit.

WN: Any vegetables or meat?

GZ: No.

WN: Where did Tam Chong get his goods?

GZ: He bought from Kahului A&B [Kahului Store], Maui Dry Goods, Davies [Theo H. Davies]. Those days Amfac [American Factors] didn't come to sell. Before, too, had plenty wholesaling firms in Honolulu--old Japanese firms.

WN: Did mostly Chinese come into Tam Chong Store?

GZ: No. All kind nationalities. It wasn't like when I had my store [Zane Store in Lower Paia, which, according to GZ in a later interview, served mostly haole and Portuguese customers]. Had quite a few Chinese stores in Paia. Tam Chong also owned a store in Pauwela. That's the one I bought.

WN: What do you remember about the 1930 fire?

GZ: I don't remember the fire because I was already in Pauwela--I bought it [Pauwela Store] from Tam Chong in 1928.

WN: How much did you buy the store for?

GZ: Three or four thousand dollars. I paid it little by little Wait a minute The land and building was leased. It was owned by a Hawaiian. So I paid only for Tam Chong's merchandise. I paid \$1,000 as a down payment. Then I paid \$100 a month after that.

WN: How did you get the capital?

GZ: I first tried to borrow money from the bank, but they refused to lend me. There was no loan company those days. I wanted \$2,000. But I think they thought I was too young, so they didn't lend me. Maybe they just didn't trust me. Haoles were like kings. It was

First Hawaiian Bank. Those days it was called Bishop Bank.

WN: Did you try other banks?

GZ: No, I never tried Bank of Hawaii. I don't remember why I didn't, though.

WN: So you needed the money mainly for merchandise?

GZ: Yeah, I needed for merchandise. But it was such a small store-- only general merchandise. Much smaller than Tam Chong Store. I paid for the merchandise which was already there [when Tam Chong was running it].

WN: Didn't you have to pay any rent?

GZ: I took over the lease from the Hawaiian. So I paid \$4,000 for the merchandise only. I had to pay twenty-five dollars a month for the lease.

WN: So, every month you paid \$125? One hundred dollars for merchandise to Tam Chong and twenty-five dollars for the lease?

GZ: Yes, yes. That's right.

WN: What about other expenses--like for equipment?

GZ: Nothing else. Showcases were already there. I had a box for ice-- to keep soda cold. We didn't have electric ice box like now. And there already was a cash register.

WN: You said that you got turned down for a loan by the bank. What other means of income did you have?

GZ: I joined a tanomoshi after I got rejected by the bank. It was all Japanese, no Chinese. I was the only one (laughs). But it was such a long time ago, I forget. Before, if you get \$100, that's plenty--just like getting \$1,000 today.

WN: In 1928, you got married?

GZ: Yes. I got to feed the family.

WN: Did your wife help you in the store?

GZ: Yeah, she helped. I did a little bit--take order and deliver. But not as much as in Paia [i.e., Zane Store in Paia].

WN: What hours was your Pauwela Store open?

GZ: Sunup to sundown.

(Laughter)

GZ: There was very little in Pauwela--very little money.

WN: What wholesalers did you deal with?

GZ: Wholesalers were very few--Maui Dry Goods, Kahului A&B Store, Wakefield & Sons, Davies. It was hard to buy from Amfac in the beginning. My store was too small. Amfac didn't think I could pay them. Only when I started my store in Paia, then they came around. Those days, if you wanted credit from a wholesaler, they would ask questions like what you did, what you think you can earn, questions like that. They investigated you. Just like when you borrow money.

WN: Did all the wholesalers do this?

GZ: Most of the big Honolulu ones. But Maui Dry Goods credit was easier to get.

WN: Why was that?

GZ: I think it was because they needed the business.

WN: So, when you had your store in Pauwela, you had to pay mostly cash to the wholesalers?

GZ: That's right. But in Pauwela, I sold most everything for cash. I didn't give any credit. Even in my store in Paia, in the beginning I didn't give credit.

WN: What kind of customers came into Pauwela Store?

GZ: Mostly Filipino pineapple workers. Pauwela was in between Haiku Fruit and Packing Company and Libby's. So I got customers from both areas. But it was only a small store--only peanuts. (Laughs)

WN: Do you remember how much your gross earnings for one day was?

GZ: Gross earnings Ten dollars, fifteen dollars, twenty dollars. I cannot remember. I think was around that much.

WN: Who kept track of the books?

GZ: I did the bookkeeping myself. Before, there was no income tax, you know. There was only a five dollar tobacco tax, and a twenty-five dollar license tax. But there was no income tax--no excise tax.

WN: Was your store the only store in Pauwela?

GZ: No, had three stores in those days. All was same size--small. During the depression was hard times. Buying was no problem [from

wholesalers]. But people weren't buying from the store. I think the sugar side was okay. But pineapple suffered during the depression. In 1934, Haiku Fruit and Packing closed. But Libby's stayed on.

END OF INTERVIEW

NOTES FROM UNRECORDED INTERVIEW

with

Gilbert Zane (GZ)

May 1, 1980

Kaneohe, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Gilbert Zane. Today is May 1, 1980, and we're at his home in Kaneohe.

The last time we were talking about your store in Pauwela. You had that store until 1934 when you started Zane Store in Lower Paia. Why did you quit the Pauwela store?

GZ: The cannery in Haiku closed down because of the depression. So, people moved out--some went to Honolulu to work for Dole Company. The Haiku cannery was bought out by Dole Company. In those days it was called Hawaiian Pineapple Company. Everything went to Honolulu, even the machinery. Some workers went to places other than Honolulu.

WN: How did you select Paia as the site of your store?

GZ: Well, at first I tried looking all over the place. I saw a place up in Makawao. But the person who owned the place wouldn't sell to me.

WN: How come he wouldn't sell to you?

GZ: I don't know. Maybe he didn't like me (laughs). So then I went to Paia. I saw an empty lot and I asked the owner of the property, Antone Tavares, if he would sell it to me.

WN: Did he sell or lease it to you?

GZ: He sold--fee simple. I don't remember for how much. Mr. Tavares was a real nice man.

The back portion of my lot used to be an old telephone station, which they broke down. That's where I built my house. I used the old lumber from the telephone station, because I didn't have much money to build my house.

I had my friend help me. Since I used the old lumber, my house only cost \$300 to build.

WN: So you built your house on the site of that old telephone station. What about your store?

GZ: I built my store right in front of my house, along the main road [Baldwin Avenue]. I used new lumber from Kahului Railroad Company. My friend worked for Kahului Railroad Company.

WN: How did you get your merchandise to start your store?

GZ: Oh, I just brought over the merchandise I already had from my Pauwela store. Then, little by little, I added to it. I had a hard time at first. Not all the wholesalers trusted me because I was new. Especially the Honolulu wholesalers--Amfac, Theo H. Davies, Wing Sing Wo.

WN: Did you need any kind of license to start?

GZ: Just a general merchandise license. And a tobacco license, that's all. The tobacco license cost about ten dollars. I forgot how much the general merchandise license cost.

Later on, we needed to get a license from the Federal government to sell things like oleomargarine. Only my store and Paia Store had this license. No other store had. Not even Paia Mercantile had, and it was one of the biggest stores. Nobody did anything about it, though.

WN: What kind of things did you have to do to get customers to start patronizing your store?

GZ: Oh, just open the door. Be nice to them (laughs). Grand opening day, I put up a big sign. People were really nice to me. The majority of my customers were haole and Portuguese. I hardly had any Japanese and Filipinos come into my store.

WN: Why do you think that was?

GZ: I don't know. Just haole and Portuguese. I don't know why.

WN: How about Chinese?

GZ: There were very few Chinese in Paia at that time [1934]. There were hardly any Chinese around the plantation area.

WN: Who helped you in the store?

GZ: My brother and my wife both helped.

WN: What wholesalers were you dealing with?

GZ: I imported many things from San Francisco. I would look at a catalogue and order dry goods. I ordered from Butler Brothers because

their price was low. Much lower than ordering from local wholesalers such as Amfac. Other stores on Maui such as Shibano Store and Ikeda's dealt with Butler Brothers.

It's always much cheaper to order goods directly from the mainland instead of dealing with local middlemen.

WN: How did you first get the idea of contacting Mainland firms?

GZ: You have to use your head. I would go to the wharf and watch goods as they come in. I would see the names of companies, and I would write to them.

WN: Did you deal with Mainland companies for groceries too?

GZ: Oh, yes. The Equitable Grocery Company of San Francisco was good and the prices were low. There was another company in Seattle that I dealt with, but I forgot the name.

I bought chicken feed from the Triangular Milling Company. I would buy in bulk--that way you can get better price.

WN: How did you pay these companies?

GZ: By bank draft. When I was notified that the merchandise arrived at the wharf, I would go to the bank and pay. I couldn't get the goods unless I pay. It's sort of like C.O.D.

WN: How did you know what goods to order?

GZ: Each company would send me a catalogue. I would just select what I wanted.

WN: Did you also deal with local wholesalers?

GZ: Yes, I did. I had to be nice to everybody.

But I dealt mostly with Mainland companies. Sometimes, when you bought things in bulk, you could put your own label on merchandise. For example, I had my own label put on my shoes.

Mainland companies also printed my store name on pencils and calendars. So I gave them away to my customers.

WN: How were goods arranged in your store? Could people help themselves?

GZ: No. You gotta serve the customers. The shelves were behind the counter. You give the customer whatever they ask for. They could pick themselves, but most times you pick for them. Most times they didn't know where things were. That's the old style of storekeeping.

WN: What were the operating hours of your store?

GZ: We opened from sunup to sundown. Not like today. This morning, I met a man who was waiting outside Long's. He didn't know what time it was going to open. I told him, "In my days, when people wanted the store to open, I would open it for them. Whenever they wanted, I would open." That's how everybody did it, those days. I remember the bank in Paia opened for me sometimes.

But, nowadays, there are labor laws. Workers have to be paid overtime if they work extra. Everything is different, today.

WN: What kind of things did you sell in your store?

GZ: Groceries, dry goods, notions, toys. Anything. Not like today. Today there aren't too much general merchandise stores. Shoes was really one of my best sellers.

WN: Did you provide delivery service?

GZ: When I first opened my store, I didn't deliver. But people really wanted it, so I had to deliver. People would tell me, "Paia store delivers, so how come you don't deliver?"

That was the competition. Most stores delivered in those days.

WN: How did you go about delivering?

GZ: I had a truck. A pickup truck. After work, I would go and take orders in the camps. I had to do it because the plantation store did that. If you don't do that [take orders and deliver], you lose out.

I did it all myself. Other stores, like Yamato, had two Filipinos doing that. Paia Mercantile had both Japanese and Filipinos.

WN: Did you go house to house?

GZ: No. I already knew what houses to go to. Mostly I took orders by telephone. Haole and Portuguese customers.

WN: Were your customers able to charge?

GZ: In the beginning, when I first started in Paia, everything was cash. I didn't know anybody, that's why. But after I got established, it was half-charge and half-cash.

That's the plantation style--charge. You gotta let people charge in order to compete [with the plantation store].

WN: How did you determine who got to charge and who didn't?

GZ: Only the people I knew I let charge.

WN: Did you have any difficulty getting them to pay?

GZ: Sometimes people didn't pay. But generally I had no trouble. The Portuguese and haoles were all good customers.

When I first started, my cash sales were better. But gradually, as you get to know people, I would start charging. But I never went to strangers' houses to take orders.

WN: Did you give any things away free?

GZ: Oh, Christmas time I would give candy away. I sold Christmas trees that I ordered from the Mainland.

WN: Who did your bookkeeping?

GZ: I had a Chinese man do it for me.

WN: During the war [World War II], how was business?

GZ: Business was very good, once I got the merchandise. But I couldn't get much. Once I get the merchandise, they buy everything. There were plenty of soldiers around. There were 30,000 Marines stationed at Camp Maui.

But most of my customers were civilians. The soldiers would catch the bus and go to Wailuku, so they would by-pass my place (laughs).

WN: When the ILWU came in 1946, how did that change your business?

GZ: Things changed a little bit. After the union [came in], people got take-home pay. Before the union, if you owe the plantation store one hundred dollars, they can always get the money from you from your paycheck. But the union eliminated that. The plantation worker got more take-home pay.

WN: So did that help or hinder your business?

GZ: I think business, for me, got better. Because the plantation store could no longer force the workers to pay. Sometimes they even paid me before the plantation store (laughs).

The plantation store did well all those [pre-union] years not because they knew how to run a business. They did well because they had no problems collecting from the workers. They could choke your neck. In those days, the plantation was king. They controlled everything.

WN: You closed your store in 1964. Can you tell me why you closed?

GZ: I quit for two reasons. The first was I was getting old [GZ was sixty-three years old when he retired]. The second was when Dream City was coming up. There weren't enough customers around Paia. People started getting into the habit of supermarket shopping. Once

people moved to Kahului, very few came back this side [Paia] to shop.

The plantation didn't want to keep maintaining the camps. So all the good customers moved out.

WN: How did you feel about closing your store?

GZ: When I first closed, I really missed it. It was a time to meet all kinds of people--big guys and small guys. I could talk to them. Here [Honolulu] I don't know anybody. They don't know you. On Maui, people respect me. They call me "Mr. Zane." Over here, they only call me "Grandpa." (Laughs)

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and
STOREKEEPERS of
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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